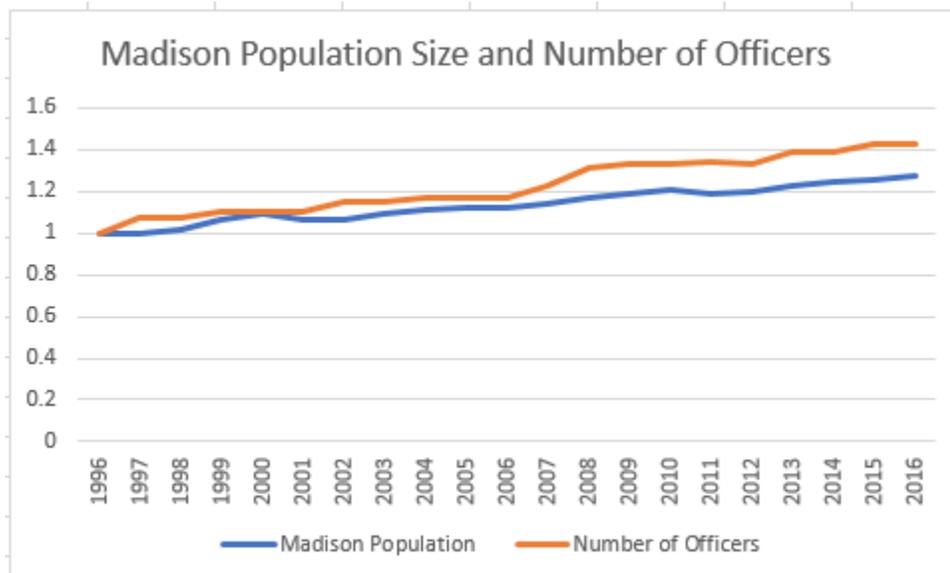


Dear Alders,

I'm writing with some additional information, relevant to the upcoming decision on whether to further expand MPD.

**1. Growth in the number of MPD officers has been outpacing growth in Madison's population, number of incidents of violent crime, and number of calls for police service.** Effectively, over time, we've been allocating an increasing proportion of our resources to police.

Here's a graph of Madison population size and number of officers (both obtained from the annual Uniform Crime Report). For the graph, both are normalized to the number in 1996.

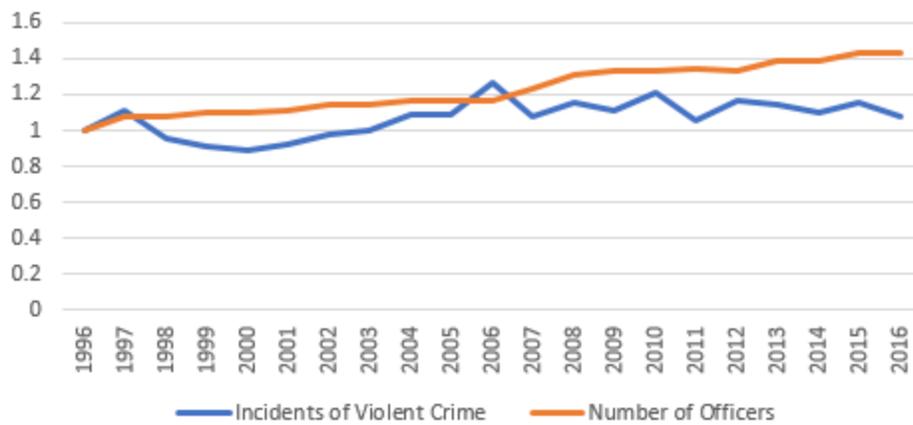


From 1996 to 2016 (the last year for which Uniform Crime Report data is available) city population size has increased from an estimate of 197,572 to an estimate of 252,136 – an increase of 27.6%.

From 1996 to 2016, the number of full time sworn MPD staff increased from 333 to 476, an increase of 42.9%.

Here's a graph of number of incidents of violent crime and number of officers (both obtained from the annual Uniform Crime Report). For the graph, both are normalized to the number in 1996.

### Incidents of Violent Crime and Number of Officers

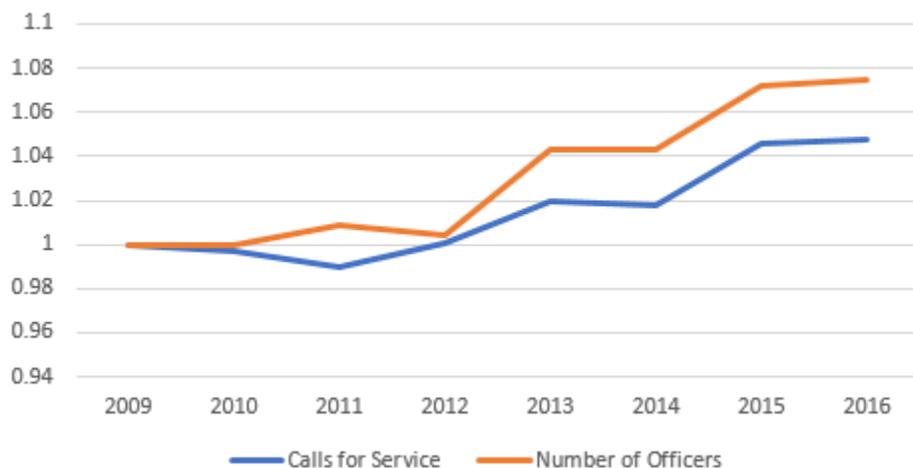


From 1996 to 2016, the number of incidents of violent crime increased from 772 to 832, an increase of 7.8%. And during this same period, I'll again note that the number of MPD officers increased by 42.9%.

As an aside I'll also note that, as with all cities, the number of incidents of violent crime fluctuates stochastically from year to year, illustrating why it's important to look at trends over a sufficient stretch of time. Trying to infer trends from a period of one or two years will produce incorrect, strongly misleading conclusions. The number of incidents of violent crime has remained fairly stable in Madison over the last two decades – actually, given the increase in city population size, the violent crime rate dropped approximately 16% from 1996 through 2016. Yet an ever-increasing proportion of Madison city resources is being expended on police.

Here's a graph of number of calls for police service and number of officers. For the graph, both are normalized to the number in 2009. For this variable, I was only able to obtain data for appropriate comparison (where the number is being generated in a consistent fashion) from 2009 to 2016 (given changes in self-reporting, etc.). I'll also note that the Y-axis is truncated in this graph.

### Calls for Service and Number of Officers



From 2009 to 2016, the number of calls for service increased from 203,031 to 212,601 – an increase of 4.7%. During the same period, the number of officers increased from 443 to 476 – an increase of 7.4%. Moreover, as I demonstrated in a prior letter to alders, a comparison of MPD with a large set of U.S. city police departments shows that MPD has more officers than average given the number of calls for service.

So Madison keeps providing more and more officers for MPD relative to its population, number of violent crimes, and number of calls for service, but MPD command staff continue to demand yet more resources. This is often justified by claiming that it's needed for community policing, but despite the growth in staffing, many of the older officers and community members I've spoken with say that the amount of genuine community and problem-oriented policing was higher near the end of Couper's term as Chief (two decades ago) than it is today.

**2.** As I noted previously, in its instructions to ETICO for the ETICO staffing study, MPD was able to dictate its desired outcome (i.e. this was not actually an independent study). In determining proactive versus reactive time, it was pretended that MPD's specialized units (Community Policing Teams, Neighborhood Officers, etc.) did not exist. As another Madison resident noted: *"the Etico staffing study and the 2016 follow up are more or less tailor-made vehicles designed to wrap the appearance of impartial assessment around what is really MPD writing their own checks for whatever they want."*

The general consensus for police department staffing (espoused by USDOJ COPS and other professional organizations) is "the rule of 60" – 60% of a department's officers should be assigned to patrol, and about 60% of a patrol officer's time (not higher) should be reactive.

For example, the International City/County Management Association *Center for Public Safety Management* (CPSM) states the following (regarding dedicated/reactive time in patrol):

*"This ratio of dedicated time compared to discretionary time [also termed reactive versus proactive time] is referred to as the "Saturation Index" (SI). It is CPSM's contention that patrol staffing is optimally deployed when the SI is in the 60 percent range. An SI greater than 60 percent indicates that the patrol manpower is largely reactive, and overburdened with CFS and workload demands. An SI of somewhat less than 60 percent indicates that patrol manpower is optimally staffed. SI levels much lower than 60 percent, however, indicate patrol resources that are underutilized, and signals an opportunity for a reduction in patrol resources or reallocation of police personnel."*

MPD only assigns 49% of its officers to patrol, having prevailed on city government to hire a lot of additional officers that MPD has assigned to specialized units – Community Police Teams, Neighborhood Officers, etc. – which are supposed to be predominantly engaged in proactive policing. When there are also specialized units such as this, the general recommendation is that patrol reactive time can be higher, since with specialized units there's additional proactive work being done separate from patrol.

As the USDOJ COPS office notes (in *"A Performance-Based Approach to Police Staffing and Allocation"*):

*"Agencies developing a specialized unit have less need to increase the discretionary time for patrol officers to devote to community policing."*

Again, from COPS:

*“Some communities might want officers to be available for patrol for at least half their shift. Others, like Chicago, devote considerable resources to specialized patrol units; as a result, beat cars need less time for officer-initiated activities.”*

MPD is basically trying to have it both ways. It told ETICO to essentially pretend that its specialized units didn't exist (to model Patrol Division as though it were operating all alone) AND to set the required proportion of proactive to reactive time high (1:1) for patrol officers. As police regulatory specialist Seth Stoughton (University of South Carolina School of Law) noted when he learned of this, it's "problematic." If the Council is committed to a 1:1 allocation of proactive versus reactive time, that needs to take into account the existence of the specialized units that are engaging in predominantly proactive policing (CPTs, Neighborhood Officers, etc.) and not pretend that Patrol Division officers are operating alone in the field.

**3.** MPD recently began tracking and publicizing instances in which MPD goes to priority call response, in which it responds only to priority calls for service (either in a district or city-wide). That MPD has periods in which officers only respond to priority calls has been heavily publicized by Koval and others pushing for additional staffing.

But publicizing this as though it were something new (leaving the citizenry with an impression of an understaffing crisis) is misleading. The policy and practice of priority call response is longstanding. It's merely the case that MPD only began tracking and publicizing it this year.

I have to credit Captain Brian Ackeret for his honest and thoughtful comments on this topic during the most recent PSRC meeting. Brian Ackeret: *“What I think is really important for this, that we don't use this - that it somehow gets tied to our staffing request. I'd be really hesitant to - for us as a police department to say hey we need more officers based on how many times we go to priority calls only.”* As he explained, adding staff wouldn't solve this – won't resolve the need for priority response only periods. Events happen where even doubling the number of officers available doesn't obviate the need to go to priority calls only.

Ackeret provided a report of all instances in the past year of priority response only. Alder McKinney then asked the key, sensible question: *“What is the report telling us?” “What are the trends?”*

Ackeret responded: *“This data haven't been analyzed enough [to be able to say anything]. it's not a record we maintain - it's something that we started tracking in 2017. We started tracking and recording it.”*

The impression on the part of some – that use of priority response only is something new – a trend that necessitates additional staffing – is incorrect. Use of priority response only is a longterm practice, where instances were not previously being tracked, and where, at this point, no trend can or should be inferred.

4. As the COPS office notes in *“How Many Police Officers Do You Need? A Performance-Based Approach to Police Staffing and Allocation”*:

*“Agencies can further alleviate the demands on sworn personnel by assigning more duties to non-sworn staff.*

*Until recently, law enforcement agencies were organized so that nearly all functions were performed by sworn officers. Many departments now employ a significant number of non-sworn staff to support police operations. In 2007, the number of full-time, non-sworn employees in local police departments was about 138,000 (Reaves 2010). The use of non-sworn staff can free sworn officers to do community policing and other tasks. Non-sworn staff may in some circumstances have skills more appropriate for a given agency task. Non-sworn staff also typically cost less than sworn personnel. One of the most common uses for non-sworn staff is as community service officers. In one jurisdiction, these personnel assist patrol officers in non-enforcement activities, respond to citizen requests for service, identify and report criminal activities, assist citizens in identifying crime-prevention techniques, and assist in traffic control of special events, among other activities (City of Minneapolis 2011).”*

About 18% of MPD positions are civilian. This proportion hasn't increased in two decades. Many large departments have civilianized a larger portion of their staff positions and have begun using community service officers, which are less expensive than sworn employees.

Officer allocation also appear to be an issue. For example, until this year, MPD allocated officers to run a DARE program (often calling it a “school safety program”) in Madison schools. Though that's been stopped for now, the intention appears to be to restart it if more officers become available. As one Madison resident correctly noted: *“DARE has proven not to be effective, with multiple research studies proving the same hypothesis. We must get more comfortable as a community to stop what isn't working and invest instead in those that do, regardless of the "good intentions" or "nice people" who propose the ineffective initiatives.”* Another example – Madison patrol officers seem to spend substantial time on random (roaming) patrols. There's a great deal of research showing that random patrols are absolutely ineffective in crime control, and lack any significant deterrent effect (MPD also engages in hot spot patrol; there's evidence that directed patrol of crime micro-hotspots can have a modest effect on crime, though the deterrent effect is very shortlived). Another example - when I've participated in protests, the number of officers assigned has often been grossly excessive (especially for protests against police actions). The often huge allocation of officers for peaceful protests (while the department complains of inadequate staffing) makes little sense. These are just a few examples of questionable resource allocation choices.

5. A [New York Times article](#) from this past week makes points of value - *“The U.S. Has Fewer Crimes. Does That Mean It Needs Fewer Police?”*

An excerpt:

*“With the close of the year, the tally was in: Crime was down in the 30 largest cities in the United States, and even a worrisome uptick in urban murders had subsided.*

*More than two decades of safer cities has cleared the way for major changes in the nation's criminal justice system: fewer prisoners, shorter sentences and more pardons.*

*But fewer crimes have not resulted in fewer police officers on the streets.*

*In 2016, there were slightly more officers per capita than in 1991, when violent crime peaked, according to data collected by the F.B.I."*

The article quotes Meghan Hollis, a criminologist and expert in police staffing at Texas State University:

*"Downsizing is not in their DNA, she added: "Police departments, as long as they have the funds, they're going to keep their force size the way it is or grow it, regardless of the crime rate. They can always adjust their statistics to make it look like they need the officers that they have."*

In discussing factors that can impact crime rates, the article also notes:

*"Last year, a study by three economists found that opening a new drug treatment center could save a city about \$700,000 a year in crime-related costs. Another new study found that expanding Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act caused a 5.8 percent reduction in violent crime."*

The point that police departments adjust their statistics to justify staffing needs is well taken, and perfectly exemplified by MPD. In its staffing studies, MPD has based the number of officers needed for Madison on the number of officers needed for cities that are much larger or with much higher crime rates (while excluding from consideration cities that actually are comparable). Repeatedly, MPD has tried to misleadingly claim trends based on only a year or two of data (often truncating timeframes to generate the desired conclusion, that more officers were needed). Improper, misleading graphs have been presented. And I've already noted the problems with the ETICO study. MPD staffing analyses are replete with analytical errors – always tweaked in the direction of seeking to justify additional staff.

6. As I've already noted – the evidence is clear that adding officers to U.S. police departments does not significantly reduce crime. As a recent, comprehensive meta-analysis [showed](#): *"the effect on crime of adding or subtracting police is miniscule and not statistically significant"*. This is not the finding of one unusual study, but rather, represents a consensus finding across the many studies that have examined the question. U.S. police departments are already so heavily staffed that we're at a point of no additional return on investment.

Moreover, intensified policing has serious adverse consequences, many of which are not adequately understood and considered. For example, as police consultant Phillip Atiba Goff (President of the Center for Policing Equity and a professor at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice) noted in a recent [New York Times article](#):

*"Change is urgently needed, considering emerging evidence that policing influences a wider array of outcomes than just crime. Research by Amanda Geller and colleagues suggests that police stops may increase stress and even provoke PTSD-like responses in young people, one of several outcomes that an emerging science connects to negative police contacts. A concrete example may be the untimely death of Erica Garner, the 27-year-old daughter of Eric Garner.*

*Some attribute Ms. Garner's heart attack to the stresses of surviving her father, who was killed by a New York City police officer.*

*We may never hear about other examples, in part because, as Corey France of Newark explained to The Atlantic in 2014, "It's uncomfortable to speak about" police contact, although he'd been stopped several times. "You feel ashamed. I feel like even talking about it brands me as a criminal." Mr. France's experience finds support in work by the political scientists Vesla Weaver and Amy Lerman. Their research suggests that police stops prompt people to stay "off the grid" — using public services less frequently for fear of additional unpleasant police contact and even producing neighborhood-wide reductions in voter turnout.*

*Our own research at the Center for Policing Equity suggests that police stops can even facilitate future criminal behaviors. In longitudinal research, adolescent boys who were stopped without breaking the law were more likely to engage in illegal behavior later in life."*

Likewise, I've previously noted a recent study by University of Michigan economics professor Michael Mueller-Smith showing that, in the long run, [arrest and incarceration may produce more crime than it prevents](#).

**7.** As I've noted before, allocating adequate (large) amounts of funding to appropriate, evidence-based non-criminal-justice approaches would far more effectively reduce crime and other related societal problems (for example implementing the Becoming A Man program in Madison, or something like the Richmond CA Office of Neighborhood Safety). Given finite city financial resources, a decision to allocate \$600,000 more to MPD on an ongoing annual basis effectively means that this money is unavailable for other programs.

On the topic of effective measures, I'll just add a quick mention of a research finding noted above — the value of allocating more resources to substance abuse treatment. From Bondurant, Lindo, & Swensen. 2016. "[Substance Abuse Treatment Centers and Local Crime](#)": *"In this paper we estimate the effects of expanding access to substance-abuse treatment on local crime. We do so using an identification strategy that leverages variation driven by substance-abuse-treatment facility openings and closings measured at the county level. The results indicate that substance-abuse-treatment facilities reduce both violent and financially motivated crimes in an area, and that the effects are particularly pronounced for relatively serious crimes. The effects on homicides are documented across three sources of homicide data."*

**8.** A tangential point I'll also note here....

At the Finance Committee meeting discussing this proposal, Alder Skidmore expressed unhappiness with a letter, which I had cosigned, noting that the per capita rate of fatal officer involved shootings was higher for MPD than NYPD. Skidmore stated:

*"Statistics can be misleading. One statistic was pointed out that MPD has more officer involved shootings of civilians than New York Police Department. I'd like to point out that there is another police department in the State of Wisconsin that has a higher rate than both New York and the*

*City of Madison and that is the Village of Blue Mounds. They have a higher per capita rate of officer involved shootings than we do.”*

In this era of alternative facts, I believe fact-checks can still be of value. I'd never heard of an officer involved shooting in Blue Mounds. I searched the internet and officer involved shooting databases, and couldn't find any indication of officer involved shootings in Blue Mounds. I asked David Couper, who lives in Blue Mounds, and he had never heard of an officer involved shooting there either (labeling Alder Skidmore's comment a "Strange statement").

I would guess that, separate from being confused about Blue Mounds, Skidmore may be confused about statistical concepts. I think he was trying to make a claim that in a smaller municipality, one could technically have what appears to be a high per capita officer involved shooting rate by chance – without it reflecting anything real about a police department – and that this could be true of Madison. This fails to understand the concept of statistical tests – the point of which is to distinguish real (meaningful) differences from stochastic noise. As I've repeatedly noted – the per capita rate of fatal officer involved shootings by MPD is not only higher than for NYPD, but significantly higher (i.e. it's not just a matter of chance); and for MPD there's been a sharp statistically significant increase over time (while for NYPD there's been a significant decline). A Fisher's Exact Test is a good way to check for a meaningful difference in a case like this. From January 2013 to the present, the p-value from a Fisher's Exact Test comparing the rate of fatal officers involved shootings for MPD versus NYPD is 0.002 (i.e. there's a highly significant difference between the departments). Over this time period, the odds of being fatally shot by a police officer was 5.0 fold higher for a Madison resident than for a New York City resident. Hopefully, that can change if the OIR recommendations are implemented (and I believe the policy changes resulting from the lawful orders issued by the Council last summer may also help).

It would be beneficial if, rather than always defending MPD to the hilt, MPD command staff and MPD boosters could listen, stop to reflect, and consider whether there might be some merit in the critiques they are hearing.

I know this was a long, information-dense e-mail. If you've gotten to this point, thank you for taking the time to read it.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gregory Gelembiuk

*Our lives begin to end  
the day we become  
silent about things  
that matter.*

*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

